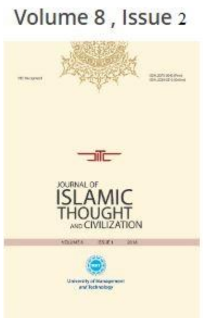



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# The Revival of Islamic Civilization: A Study of Maryam Jameelah's Views

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## Abstract

Maryam Jameelah was an American convert to Islam. Born to a non-observant Jewish family in New York, she travelled to Pakistan on the invitation of Abul A'la Maududi where she spent more than fifty years and never returned to America. Her various writings on the comparative study of Western and Islamic culture, civilization, and history encouraged her readers to consider her as a fervent critic of Western civilization and as a staunch supporter of Muslim cause in the modern world. However, scant consideration has been given to the fact that while pointing out the reasons for the downfall of Islamic civilization, she also criticizes Muslim scholarship. Therefore, it is worthy to explore how a person trained in the Western thought understands the problems of Muslim civilization and what she suggests as countermeasures to take in this regard. By analyzing her published writings as well as the unpublished works found in her personal library, the current paper highlights her view of Islamic civilization and attempts to present the major problems faced by Muslims in the modern age according to her. Afterwards, it describes her understanding of these problems and shows that she proposes a thorough study of tradition, internal coherence, adoption of modern sciences, democracy and advancement in education for the revival of Islamic civilization without providing any model for the practical implementations of these suggestions.

**Keywords**: Maryam Jameelah, Islamic civilization, problems of Muslims, modernism, tradition

## Brief Life Sketch of Maryam Jameelah

Born as Margret Marcus, in 1934, Maryam Jameelah was an American Jewish convert to Islam. Her ancestors were followers of Moses Mendelssohn's[1] (1729-1786) Reform Movement and therefore used to consider themselves as Reform Jews.[2] Her mother, Maira Marcus, was a social worker and an active member of a Zionist organization *Haddasah*. Her father, Herbert Marcus, was also a staunch supporter of Zionism.[3] However, it never appealed to Jameelah. Furthermore, a relationship with *Mizrachi Hatzair*, a Zionist movement, distanced her from Zionism even more once she realized that this organization was promoting hostility among Jews and Arabs.[4]

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[1]Moses Mendelssohn was a German Jewish philosopher who is considered among the antecedents of modern Reform Judaism.

[2]Maryam Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth* (Lahore: Mohammad Yusuf Khan, 1989), 11.

[3]Ibid., 49.

[4]*Islam and Modernism* (Lahore: Mohammad Yusuf Khan and Sons, 1988), ix.

She noted that her family wholeheartedly adopted American culture, hoping to better integrate into the Western society. Instead of practicing important Jewish rituals such as Hanukkah and Yom Kippur, it used to celebrate Christian festivals such as Easter and Christmas with full ceremony.[5] Consequently, her whole family distanced itself from their ancestral religion and ultimately adopted Christianity.[6] The conversion of Jameelah was unique in the sense that unlike her family she converted to Islam instead of any other religion. Albeit she mostly got a secular education, her interest in religious studies was evident since her childhood. Due to her psychological problems,[7] she was not able to complete her formal education and quit the university after her second nervous breakdown.

Historical relations between Jews and Arabs provoked her interest in Islam and love for Arab culture and civilization.[8] From her earlier days, she was fond of reading about Arabs and Islam. She wrote that "[f]rom the age of ten I had developed a passion for reading all the books about the Arabs I could lay my hands on at school or at the public libraries in my community, especially those dealing with the historical relationship between the Jews and Arabs…"[9] Her love of classical music introduced her to the *tilāwah* of the Holy Qur'ān. Her study of Islam answered her various questions regarding hereafter and life after death that played a vital role in her conversion to Islam. In 1960, she embraced Islam and two years later, on the invitation of Abu A'la Maududi[10] (1903-1979), migrated to Pakistan. She became the second wife of Muhammad Yousuf Khan who was a full-time worker of *Jamaat-e-Islami*, a political and religious movement. She wrote eleven books and hundreds of book reviews in which she discussed her views about the comparative study of Western and Islamic culture, civilization, and history. She died in 2012 leaving two girls and two boys behind her.

## 2. Earlier Studies on Maryam Jameelah

Noting her thoughts about Islam and Western civilization, scholars such as Patrick D. Bowen[11] and Marcia Hermansen[12] write, that due to the influence of Maududi and other conservative Muslim writers of her time, Jameelah presents a conservative and fundamentalist view of Islam. She criticizes Western civilization and claims the

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[5] *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 9-11.

[6] Ibid., 208.

[7] She went through multiple nervous breakdowns during her life. However, after her migration to Pakistan, she got rid of her psychological problems.

[8] Maryam Jameelah and Abul A'lā Mawdūdī, *Correspondence between Maulana Maudoodi and Maryam Jameelah* (Lahore: Mohammad Yusuf Khan, 1969), 9.

[9] Maryam Jameelah, *Islam Versus Ahl al-Kitāb: Past and Present* (Delhi: Taj Company, 1993), xx.

[10] Abu A'la Maududi was a famous theologian, political leader, *faqīh*, *muffasir*, and founder of *Jamaat-e-Islami* movement in Pakistan.

[11] Bowen writes that after reading many books and articles of Jameelah, he came to that conclusion. For details see. Patrick D. Bowen, *A History of Conversion to Islam in the United States, Volume 1: White American Muslims before 1975* (Boston: Brill, 2015), 342.

[12] Hermansen proposed that Jameelah was heavily influenced by the conservative *Jamāt-e-Islāmi* Movement of Pakistan. For details see. Marcia Hermansen, "Roads to Mecca: Conversion Narratives of European and Euro-American Muslims," *The Muslim World* 89, no. 1 (1999): 79.

supremacy of Islam over other religions. Describing her views on Islam and the Western society, John Esposito and John Voll observe that the issue of Islamic reform and the impact of West on Muslims are the two big themes of her writings. She criticizes Muslim and non-Muslim reformers of Islam alike and maintains that Islam does not need any reform. They write that "[t]he bulk of Jameelah's criticisms are directed at both secular and Islamic modernists alike, all of whom are guilty of 'West-worshipping.'"[13] Earlier researches show that she has been mostly studied as an ardent critic of Western civilization. However, little consideration has been given to the fact that she not only criticizes the modern Western civilization but also works for the revival of Islamic civilization. Therefore, it is desirable to understand the major problems of Muslim civilization in her view and what she suggests as countermeasures to take in this regard.

## 3. Importance of the Concept of Islamic Civilization

From her writings, it is evident that she considers Islam a complete religion and a complete civilization. In her book, *Islam and Modernism*, she devotes a complete article titled "Islam is a Civilization" in which she claims that Islam not only provides a theoretical model of life but also teaches its practical implementations. She thinks that when Muslims try to present Islam before non-Muslims, they must tell them how Islam has been implemented in its history. She writes that:

> There is no hope for the revival, propagation and survival of Islam unless it is presented to westernized Muslims and non-Muslims, not as a mere vague set of doctrines and mode of worship that can be made compatible with any culture but as a specific civilization based on absolute, transcendental values which was, until the very recent past, an autonomous, independent historical reality.[14]

She herself was a convert to Islam and therefore, along with its religious aspect, she upholds its civilizational aspect as well. From her personal library in Lahore, the researcher found a short piece of writing titled *My Life Story: An American Muslim Convert Between Two Worlds 1934-1975*.[15] In this writing, she has tried to answer the questions she never shared with anyone.[16]

She is heavily influenced by the works of Muhammad Asad[17] (1900-1992) and mentions repeatedly about the motivation she finds from his writings.[18] In her *My Life Story*, she analyzes the conversion of Muhammad Asad and concludes that Asad accepted Islam on two levels, on the level of religion and on the level of civilization. Similarly, she

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[13]John L. Esposito and John O. Voll, *Makers of Contemporary Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

[14]Jameelah, *Islam and Modernism*, 36.

[15]This document is referred in this research with the same name given by Maryam Jameelah.

[16]Maryam Jameelah, *My Life Story: An American Muslim Convert between Two Worlds 1934-1975*, (Lahore: Personal Library of Maryam Jameelah, 1975).

[17]Muhammad Asad was also a Jewish convert to Islam who earned his fame as a journalist, translator, Islamic scholar and *mufassir*.

[18]Maryam Jameelah, *A Great Islamic Movement in Turkey: Badee-u-Zaman Said Nursi* (Lahore: Mohammad Yusuf Khan, 1981), 3; Review of *Islam at the Crossroads*, by Muhammad Asad, *Muslim World Book Review* 5, no. 4 (1985); *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 109, 68, 210.

presents her acceptance of Islam at two levels. She writes that “[w]hen I embraced Islam, this meant to me not only a change of faith but even more important, a transference of my allegiance from Western to Islamic civilization.”[19] Therefore, it can be said that she not only accepts Islam as a religion but also embraces it as a civilization. Being a convert, for Jameelah the concept of civilization is “more important” than the concept of religion.

Akin to Jameelah, various other converts to Islam also point out the same thing. For instance, Balquis Muhammad[20] expresses that her parents were not in favor of her conversion from Christianity to Islam, not because of the religious differences but because of the cultural differences that they thought Islam has with the American life.[21] Similarly, apart from the analysis of Jameelah, the writings of Asad also indicate the cultural dimension of his conversion. In his magnum opus, *The Road to Mecca*, Asad notes that when he embraced Islam, initially his father abandoned him thinking that Asad had become “a renegade, not so much from his faith (for that has never held him strongly) as from the community in which he grew up and the culture to which he is attached.”[22] This discussion shows that sometimes for converts, the concept of civilization acquires more importance than the concept of religion itself. When a person embraces Islam, s/he not only accepts a set of new doctrines, rituals or worships but also prepares her/himself to adopt a different culture and civilization.

## 4. Problems of Muslims as Depicted by Maryam Jameelah

The major reasons she believes are causing the decline of Muslim civilization are briefly discussed below.

### 4.1. Impact of West on Muslim Community

After her migration, she spent 50 years in a Muslim community and observed keenly the issues and challenges of Muslim *Ummah*. She preferred Pakistan to America in the hope to live in a “genuine Islamic society.” However, she found the Western outlook of Pakistani Muslims abhorrent and expressed her thoughts by saying that:

> Westernism has become the great god of the East and ‘Modernization,’ ‘progress’ and ‘development’ the new Trinity replacing the old Christian Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Ghost ... The imposition of an alien and corrupt educational system, the combined impact of transistor radio, cinema and television have destroyed the last vestiges of native culture and produced an attitude of contempt among the younger people for everything which is not modern or western. [23]

She writes that Islam as a civilization is dying in the Muslim community. Philosophies such as modernism, Darwinism, materialism, and feminism are promoting secularism in the Muslim lands. After the end of the colonial rule, Muslim community has failed to determine what it is meant to be independent. It is not working to revive the Islamic civilization. On the contrary and in a way similar to the devout Jews and

[19] *My Life Story: An American Muslim Convert between Two Worlds 1934-1975.*

[20] A friend of Maryam Jameelah and a Christian convert to Islam.

[21] Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 168.

[22] Muhammad Asad, *The Road to Mecca* (New Delhi: Islamic Book Service, 2004), 311.

[23] Jameelah, *My Life Story: An American Muslim Convert between Two Worlds, 1934-1975*.

Christians of the West, it is trying to practice its religion as best as it can in the dominant secular environment.[24]

Moreover, she writes that Muslim migration from East to West is also increasing the process of westernization because these migrants are dependent on non-Muslims for their homes, jobs, study or career. Therefore, they are compelled to follow their rules. They are "never allowed to forget even for a moment that non-conformity can mean expulsion from college or university, loss of job, deportation, jail or even commitment to some mental institution."[25] She observes that Muslims think that migration to the West or even conversion to Islam in the West will result in the rise of Islamic cause in Europe and America. However, for her, it is no more than just a wishful thinking as now there are a great number of converts in the West but it "is still no argument that Islam has begun to exert any significant influence today on Western society as a whole."[26] Though her exploration of different instances of the migration of Muslims to the West leads to the conclusion she has reached, yet there are also other dimensions to this exploration. For example, an increase in the number of Muslims has also witnessed a notable increase in the construction of mosques, missions, and Islamic centers[27] also acting as the *dawah* centers of Islam, serving as sacred places of worship and standing as the symbols of Islamic civilization in the West. Unlike her times,[28] it is relatively easy to collect information about the teachings of Islam in the West. However, the points she raises regarding the social, economic, and political inferiority of Muslims seem plausible. It is true that the overall condition of Western Muslim community has improved vis-a-vis other religious communities (such as Jews who were once forced to live in Ghettos[29] and are now controlling the world economy); they still trail others by a long distance especially from political and social perspectives. Apart from their internal conflicts, the issues like anti-Muslim right,[30] racism, and anti-immigration policies of America and Europe are also creating difficulties for them. There is a fair chance that these migrations might be accelerating the process of westernization and, as Jameelah says, making Muslims the followers of the "new Trinity" of modernization, progress and development.

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[24]Review of *The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam*, by Yusuf al-Qardawi, *Muslim World Book Review* 4, no. 2 (1984).

[25]Review of *Muslims in the West: The Message and Mission*, by Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, *Muslim World Book Review* 5, no. 2 (1985).

[26]*Islam at the Crossroads*, 40.

[27]Construction of mosques and Islamic centers is regarded as the second stage of identity development of Muslims in the west.

[28]During her time, there were few Islamic missions in America. To collect information about Islam, she traveled from New York to Washington D.C and met Mahmud Hoballah (1903-1974) who was serving as the director of Islamic center. See, Jameelah, *Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*.

[29]Cecil Roth, *The Jewish Contribution to Civilization* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers,1940), 37.

[30]Muslim migration to Europe is considered as the fear that sooner or later Islam will conquer the Europe. This idea raises the issue of anti-Muslim right and violence. For details, see the introduction of Sasha Polakow-Suransky, *Go Back to Where You Came From: The Backlash against Immigration and the Fate of Western Democracy* (London: Hurst, 2017).

### 4.2. Internal Disorder of Muslims

The next point she has raised is the internal disorder of Muslims. For her, this issue is also connected to the problem of westernization and modernity. She argues that since the advent of colonial rule, the East has started becoming weaker and weaker not only economically and culturally but also militarily. Its quest for "development" results in its dependence on the West. Validating her point, she provides the example of Arabs that once used to live poor and hard but self-sufficient lives according to their own rules, beliefs, and customs. However, in their quest for "progress," they enjoy a relatively easy but a restricted life. Due to favoring industry over agriculture, even for their food they are now dependent upon the West.[31] She writes that instead of raising their voice for the Palestinian cause, today the helpless Arab leaders are fighting each other in frustration. Moreover, in a way similar to her contemporaries, she also thinks that the *ulama* of the modern age are also not exploring the actual problems of Muslims. Being preoccupied with sectarianism, they are fighting over minor *fiqhi* matters instead. Hence, she claims that the issue of westernization is a very serious issue for Muslims. It is not only proving its cultural supremacy but also causing internal rifts for them.

### 4.3. Role of Muslim Reformers

For Maryam Jameelah, the role of various Muslim reformers is also questionable. She is convinced that Islam is "far more seriously menaced from within than from without."[32] She finds that educated Muslims are endorsing the Western culture and its values. Being unaware of the incompatibility of the Western ideals and Islamic values, they are doing nothing but opposing their own tradition. In this respect, she even condemns her mentor, Abu A'la Maududi, regarding him as a modernist.[33] She was living in an era when most of the Western scholars, for example, Hamilton Gibb (1895-1971), Wilfred Cantwell Smith (1916-2000), and Nadav Safran (1925-2003) were either suggesting reforms in Islam or proposing secularism as a panacea for the Muslim *Ummah.* They were pointing out the deficiencies of Muslims but kept ignoring what colonial powers did to the eastern lands.[34] Akin to them, the writings of Muslim scholars such as Ghulam Ahmad Parvez (1903-1985), Qasim Amin (1863-1908), and Ziya Gokalp (1876-1924) were also apparently suggesting similar solutions. She started writing against both the Muslim and the non-Muslim scholars of Islam. In conclusion, it can be said that for her the influence of Western philosophies inspired Muslim scholars to endorse Western culture, criticize Islamic tradition, and suggest a separation between religion and public life. Therefore, she views the efforts of these scholars as hurdles in the revival of Islamic civilization.

Writing against all sorts of religious reforms, she thinks that Western religions such as Christianity and Judaism have failed to properly respond to the problems of

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[31] Jameelah, *Muslims in the West: The Message and Mission*, 11.

[32] *Islam Versus the West* (Lahore: Mohammad Yusuf Khan, 1984), 38.

[33] For details, see "Modern Ideas and Concepts in the Works of Maulānā Sayyid Abul A'lā Mawdūdī," *Islamic Studies* 42, no. 2 (2003).

[34] For example, Edward Said points out that "[at] no point does Gibb speak of European colonialism when he discusses the rise of nationalism and its 'toxins." Edward W. Edward, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979), 279.

modernization and therefore have accepted secularism in principle.[35] She thinks that while confronting the issue of modernity, Muslims are on the same page with Christians and Jews. They must learn the lesson from their mistakes. She warns Muslims not to rejoice at the destruction of Western religions but prepare themselves for "the destruction of one religion leads to the destruction of others."[36] By doing so, she highlights the importance of a comparative study of world religions and advises Muslims to be prepared for future challenges.

### 4.4. Negligence of Islamic Art

From the writings of Jameelah, it becomes evident that she is a fervent advocate of Islamic art.[37] For her, Islamic art, an essential part of Islamic civilization, is neglected by Muslims in the modern age. She notes that though, in the recent past, colonialism was the major cause of the decline of Islamic art; however, in modern times, Muslims themselves are the reasons of its downfall. She believes that in Muslim countries, most of the artists are attached to the Western art which results in nothing but the construction of monasteries such as the Faisal Mosque of Islamabad and the Defense Housing Mosque of Karachi. Moreover, she also says that, "Most hostile to Islamic art may be the Wahhabi/Salafists who have ruthlessly destroyed nearly all the historic architecture of Arabia and the Gulf, including numerous holy places in Makkah and Madinah, sparing only the Kabbah and the Prophets last resting place."[38]

Therefore, she advocates the practice of art as being an inevitable part of religion and criticizes those against it. Although she was considered a fundamentalist by some scholars, however, her views about art and religion portray her as a traditionalist.

She also thinks that the Arabic language is under constant attack of Western orientalists. Arab intelligentsia, which has been trained mostly in the colonial era missionary schools, is not in favor of Arabic and considers it primitive and backward.[39] She adds that under the influence of the orientalists, Arabs themselves advocated repudiating the classical poetical restraints of Arabic poetry. Consequently, the new generations of Arab poets have fallen under the spell of European and American literary influences. She concludes that "the 'new poetry' can be regarded as an integral part of the Westernization process taking place in the Middle East."[40] Thus, it can be said that her conclusion regarding Islamic arts and literature also point towards the influence of colonialism and westernization. She is sure that Islamic art has not only been discouraged by the colonial rulers but has been ignored by the Muslims as well.

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[35]Maryam Jameelah, *Western Civilization Condemned by Itself: A Comprehensive Study of Moral Retrogression and Its Consequences*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Lahore: Mohammad Yusuf Khan, 1971), XI.

[36]*Memories of Childhood in America: The Story of One Western Convert's Quest for the Truth*, 161.

[37]Review of *Through Muslim Eyes: M. Rashid Rida and the West (Dissertations Series 1),* by Emad Eldin Shahin, *Muslim World Book Review* 5, no. 3 (1995).

[38]Review of *Fine Arts of Islamic Civilisation*, by Muhammad Abdul Jabbar Beg, *Muslim World Book Review* 27, no. 4 (2007): 93.

[39]Review of *Modern Poetry of the Arab World*, by Abdullah al-Udhairi, *Muslim World Book Review* 9, no. 2 (1989).

[40]Ibid.

## 5. Maryam Jameelah's Analysis

Maryam Jameela analyzes that the decline of the Muslim community is rooted almost in the same time period when colonial powers occupied the non-European countries. Consequently, none of the non-European countries or non-white races were able to resist the process of westernization. She claims that "recent past shows that *being primitive or civilised made absolutely no difference every non-European people, without exception, fell victim to Western domination*."[41] She adds that it was not only Muslims who were overwhelmed by the superiority of the Western civilization, people of other nations regardless of their race, religion, and country also fell under the spell of modernity. Validating her point, she provides the example of Chinese civilization which was once based on the Confucian ethical classics. However, when the communist took control of China, Mao Tse-tung[42] (1893-1976) announced that, "*We wish to completely eradicate the old Chinese culture.*[43]"

For her, what Muslims are importing from the West under the title of modernism is nothing but the culture of Jews and Christians. She is against the modernist approach to the study of Islam. Many modernists suggest a reform in Islam and conclude that Islam must be reinterpreted to address the needs of the modern age. However, Maryam Jameelah rejects these notions viewing modernity or westernization as not being universal or global. She thinks that, "'international culture' or 'modernism' is simply one-way traffic from the West; Europe and America involved wholly in export and Asia and Africa only in import."[44] Thus, in this way, she warns Muslims about the impact of the contemporary philosophy of materialism which she thinks has occupied the Western countries and is now spreading towards the East in the guise of modernism. In her book, *Islam and Modernism*, she quotes Ibn Khaldūn[45] (1332-1306) saying that mostly a defeated nation tries to adopt the culture and habits of the victorious nation. Sometimes, they adopt it unconsciously and think that by doing so they are revitalizing themselves.[46] She concludes that if Muslims keep imitating the Western ideals, they will imitate their infectious diseases as well. Henceforth, Muslims must not copy non-Muslims as the Holy Prophet (*SAW*) also forbade them to imitate others.

## 6. Suggestions of Maryam Jameelah

In general, she proposes changes both at personal and private, national and international, and individual and collective levels. The researcher has collected and subdivided her recommendations into following categories.

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[41]Emphasis is from Maryam Jameelah; Jameelah, *Muslims in the West: The Message and Mission*, 11.

[42]Mao was the founding father of the People's Republic of China. He was an ardent communist.

[43]Emphasis is from Maryam Jameelah; Maryam Jameelah, *Islam and Western Society: A Refutation of the Modern Way of Life* (Delhi: Adam Publishers and Distributors, 1990), 27.

[44]Ibid., 10.

[45]Arab Muslim historiographer and historian who is regarded among the founding fathers of modern sociology.

[46]Jameelah, *Islam and Modernism*, 25.

### 6.1. Internal Coherence

- Muslim scholars must find a way to end their internal conflicts.
- *Ulama* should condemn attempts of "self-appointed reformers" as heretical by official *fatwas*.
- Unanimous explanation of "what Islam is and what it is not" by all recognized Islamic schools of thought.[47]
- The non-Western world must reject westernization and the materialistic way of life and uphold their religious inheritance based on the absolute, transcendental ideal.[48]
- For the survival of humanity, it is necessary to repudiate modernism and restore the traditional orthodoxy of all major world religions.[49]
- Rather than a revolution, the most important need of Muslims is social integration based upon moral and spiritual renovation.[50]
- Although the colonial rule has resulted in the decline of the Islamic world, Muslims must collect whatever is left of their culture and civilization.[51]
- Arabs should reject nationalism, socialism, and Marxism and adopt Islam as the only valid base for the unification.[52]
- Muslims must learn from the achievements of other religious folds especially from the medieval Jews who changed their tragic history by establishing "schools for their children, their own philanthropic organizations, their own shops to make Halal foods easily available and also set up their own commercial enterprises to provide adequate employment opportunities."[53]

### 6.2. Education

- She agrees with Sayyid Qutb[54] (1906-1966) that the Holy Qur'ān must be the focal point of children's education.
- It should not only be memorized mechanically but also tried to be understood as much as possible.
- It must be integrated into every subject and should not be taught in isolation only.
- The study of history must be a part of the curriculum. Children should first learn the history of their country and later the history of Islamic civilization. Only afterwards, they should be introduced to the history of Europe and America written by the Western authors.
- Higher education must encourage the students to study modern philosophies with an independent and open mind. Only then, it will be possible to achieve another renaissance.[55]

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[47] *Islam and Orientalism* (Lahore: Mohammad Yusuf Khan and Sons, 1981), 27-29.

[48] *Islam and Western Society: A Refutation of the Modern Way of Life*, 250.

[49] Review of *The Spiritual and Religious Dimensions of the Environmental Crisis* by Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Muslim World Book Review* 21, no. 2 (2001).

[50] *Islam and Western Society: A Refutation of the Modern Way of Life*, 97.

[51] Ibid., 78.

[52] *Islam and Modernism*, 197-98.

[53] *Islam Versus Ahl Al-Kitāb: Past and Present*, 132.

[54] Sayyid Qutb was an Islamic scholar, poet, historian, political philosopher and one of the prominent members of *Al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn*.

[55] Jameelah, *Islam Versus the West*, 100-02.

- The Muslim community must recognize the mosque as the only proper place of education. Therefore, every mosque must also have a school as well.
- Although it is a duty of government to provide financial as well as moral support for education, those who are wealthy should also aid the education system with their donations. The support of *zakāt* and voluntary charity can make education free from primary to university level.
- Although parents should be encouraged in every way to send their children to school, they must not be forced by law to do so.[56]
- During the compilation of curriculum, it must be maintained that European and American literature containing materialistic concepts should not be taught.
- Muslims must produce the bulk of literature on history, sociology, psychology, and biology from the Islamic point of view.
- Muslims must write their history in an inspiring manner that can make them feel proud of their culture and civilization.
- Muslims must adopt Arabic as their national language and as a medium of instruction in schools and colleges.
- They should stop the use of Roman alphabets for Urdu, Bengali, or other vernaculars.
- The role of English should be limited and it should be used only so long as its practical necessity remains.

### 6.3. The Problem of Foreign Influence

- Instead of banning orientalist's work, Muslims should write scholarly refusals based on logical and persuasive reasoning to replace the anti-Islamic works.
- Muslims should produce a generation of occidentalists that can take care of the orientalist problem.
- Muslims must stop over-glorification of the achievements of past and must work for the future.
- Muslims must rewrite Islamic as well as European history in an interesting and exquisite way from an Islamic point of view.[57]
- "Muslims must crush the conspiracies of Zionism, Freemasonry, orientalism and foreign missions both with the pen and with the sword."[58]
- To get rid of foreign influence, Muslims should not only condemn modern philosophies but also construct positive practical alternatives based on pure Islamic ideals.[59]
- Muslims must realize the necessity of their duty of *dawah* both in individual and organizational form.
- Those who are involved in the work of *dawah* must present Islam in a rational and universal manner providing the details of its rich culture throughout the history.

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[56] *Islam in Theory and Practice* (Lahore: Mohammad Yusuf Khan, 1978), 103-05. [57] Ibid., 394.
[58] *Islam Versus Ahl al-Kitāb: Past and Present*, 390. [59] *Islam in Theory and Practice*, 100.

### 6.4. Social Norms

- Filial loyalty and respect of elders must be encouraged in every possible way. The best possible way to achieve it is "to put an end to the cult of youth-worship."
- When women are playing their role effectively in taking care of home life, they should show no desire to play the role of a man. Neither should they dislike for being required by the law to wear modest dresses.
- To achieve an Islamic milieu, segregation of males and females, banning of immoral books, alcohol, cinema, and other un-Islamic customs is strictly necessary.
- Minorities must be given complete social, cultural, and religious freedom according to the rules of *shari'ah*.[60]

### 6.5. Foreign Relations

- Muslim lands must not be given to foreign powers to maintain their military bases.
- Muslims should rely on their own resources and therefore avoid foreign aid.
- Foreign Christian missions, Zionism, Communism, and the Freemasons must be outlawed.[61]
- The common grounds between Islam and other world religions must be stressed.

## 7. Conclusion

Maryam Jameelah spent a significant portion of her life in both West and East and practically observed the social and academic environment of both communities. She was convinced that the process of secularization as initiated in the West is causing a serious danger to the religious and spiritual atmosphere of the whole world. So, she opposes modernity and holds it responsible for the downfall of world religions. She regrets that Judaism has adopted a secular outlook in hope of better integration into the European culture. Consequently, she converted to Islam and travelled towards East to live and prosper in a Muslim community.

Living in a male dominant community, in Pakistan, she produced a plethora of literature to prove the supremacy of her version of Islam and to challenge the male authority. Unlike converts such as Amina Wadūd, she has never been stigmatized as a feminist by the Muslims. She was aware of this fact and thus writes that "my writings are always praised or criticized on their merits. Never have my books or essays been scorned by any Muslims merely because the author was a woman."[62] She is perceived as an important spokesperson of *Jamaat-e-Islami*. Her work has earned special privileges in the female wings of Jamaat. In her study of Jamaat women, Amina Jamal regards Hamida Begum and Jameelah as the two important representatives of the movement.[63] Similar to *Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan*, international wings of the movement including *Jamaat-e-*

[60]Ibid., 106-07.

[61]*Islam and Modernism*, 33.

[62]*Islam Versus Ahl al-Kitāb: Past and Present*, 96.

[63]Amina Jamal, *Jamaat-e-Islami Women in Pakistan: Vanguard of a New Modernity?* (New Jersey: Syracuse University Press, 2013), 115.

*Islami Hind*[64] and *Jamaat-e-Islami Jammu and Kashmir,*[65] also used to send her invitations to participate in the conferences and meetings of the *Jamaat.* These invitation letters are still preserved in her personal library.

She is mostly studied as an ardent critic of Western civilization. Her efforts regarding the revival of Islamic civilization are mostly ignored. It is overlooked that being a convert, the issue of the revival of Islamic civilization had a special significance for her. The current study concludes that she studied Islam as a religion and as a civilization to point out the problems of Muslim *Ummah*. She maintains that Islam is breathing its last as a civilization. For her, one of the major reasons of Muslims' failure is their internal rifts whereas Western domination, colonial rule, and orientalist interpretation of Islam are the other major causes of this decline. Moreover, she thinks that under the influence of colonialism Muslims themselves have overlooked the practice of Islamic art and have adopted Western art instead. They forget the importance of their own history and tradition. For her, this approach causes serious dangers for Islamic culture and civilization. She holds colonialism and westernization responsible for most of the problems the Muslim world is facing today. Consequently, she discourages Muslims to migrate to the Western lands, practice Western art and endorse Western culture. Alternatively, she suggests them to give attention to their own traditions. She proposes writing on this subject rather than banning the anti-Islamic works. However, it appears that Muslims are not learning the lessons. In modern times, they are banning anti-Islamic websites fruitlessly as they were banning anti-Islamic writings in the past. It must be understood that the best method to replace something is to bring something better than it.

She claims that a good number of Muslim and non-Muslim scholars are trying hard to interpret Islam in such a way which is far away from the traditional orthodoxy. She criticizes the modern scholars of Islam arguing that Islam does not need any sort of reform. She seems right in suggesting that Islam as a religion is not in need of any reform. However, she overlooks that if Islam as a civilization is not in need of any reform then why she is working for its revival?

It is often argued that the Western political invasion caused the Western philosophical invasion. Orientalists tried everything to propagate negatively that Islam and only Islam was the cause of the decline of Muslim community in the modern world.[66] However, the analysis made by Jameelah leads to the conclusion that it is not Islam that causes this decline, rather it is the Muslims that have become the reason of this downfall. Thus, for her, the revival of Islamic civilization is bound with the revival of Muslims. She suggests practices such as the thorough study of the tradition, internal coherence, adoption of modern sciences, democracy and education to achieve this revival. However, it has been noted that she did not provide any model or framework for the practical implementation of her various suggestions.

[64]See, Muhammad Yusuf, "Muhammad Yusuf to Maryam Jameelah" (Lahore: Personal Library of Maryam Jameelah, 1975).

[65]See, Begum Haneef, "Begum Haneef to Maryam Jameelah" (Lahore: Personal Library of Maryam Jameelah, 1981).

[66]Muhammad Akram Virk, *Matūn-e-Hadīth Pr Jdīd Adhān Kē Ashkālāt* (Lahore: Kitāb Mahal, 2016), 14.

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